DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 666 HE 016 561

AUTHOR Rabineau, Louis
TITLE Postsecondary Program Review. Issuegram 40.
INSTITUTION Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo.
PUB DATE 1 Mar 83
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *College Programs; *Educational Assessment; Educational Policy; *Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; Private Colleges; *Program Evaluation; Public Policy; State Boards of Education; *State Standards; Statewide Planning

ABSTRACT

The development of state program review and different state approaches to program review are examined, along with policy issues, implications, and alternatives. It is noted that most state policy calls for periodic reviews of college programs leading to certificates or degrees. New developments in state program reviews include: review of undergraduate as well as graduate programs, review of private colleges' programs on a voluntary basis, greater comprehensiveness of reviews, and the inclusion of reviews as part of statewide planning and budgeting processes. Policy issues include the following: the purpose of program review, the definition of a program, the criteria for judging a program, and the relationship of program review to accreditation and state licensing. Among the major implications are the following: coordination, time delays, initiative, the special situation of private colleges, campus review of programs, mission and potential, and redundancy. Policy alternatives include campus review or state review, joint campus and state review, and internal or external review. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED234666

.ecs issuegram

A service of the Education Commission of the States

40. Postsecondary Program Review

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ECS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ISSUEGRAMS
are summary reports on major education issues written for state leaders. They include background information, analysis of differing views, lists of sources and references — all written for busy readers. Each is updated periodically. For more information, see inside back cover or call ECS Distribution Center at (303) 830-3820.

.ecs issuegram
Education Commission of the States
Distribution Center
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80295

HE016561

This Issuegram was prepared on March 1, 1983, by Louis Rabineau, director of the Inservice Education Program (IEP) and of the Advanced Leadership Program Services (ALPS) at ECS. For more detail, call 303-830-3780.

40. Postsecondary Program Review

The Issue

Policy in most states calls for periodic reviews of the courses of study leading to certificates or degrees in postsecondary institutions. These program reviews are often required by state legislatures, which authorize appropriate state higher education agencies to perform the task. Review by these agencies raises a basic question: How can states accommodate and nurture the autonomy that campuses need to operate efficiently and at the same time assure that campuses remain accountable to the states? Related questions are:

- How can public institutions of higher education be encouraged to increase the quality and efficiency of their programs?
- Can program review help statewide planning and allocation of funds?

This Issuegram describes the development of state program review; different state approaches to it; and policy issues, implications and alternatives.

The Development of Program Review

Many states have approved proposed programs in postsecondary education for a number of years. But they have begun to review existing programs only in the last two decades, when most statewide systems of higher education were established.

States became interested in program review because they needed to: (1) plan effectively, (2) allocate resources reasonably, (3) increase efficiency, (4) avoid unnecessary duplication, and (5) improve quality. Since the early seventies, they have often sought to improve review policies and to review programs more regularly. Economic pressures, enrollment declines and widespread interest in systemization and greater efficiency are behind this heavier emphasis.

As a result, recent years have brought some new developments to state review.

- Although the review of existing programs began at the graduate level, undergraduate programs are now being reviewed as well.

- Although states have for the most part reviewed programs in public institutions, a few have conducted limited reviews in private institutions. In some cases, the participation of private institutions has been voluntary.

- Reviews are becoming more comprehensive, covering programs at all levels simultaneously, for example, or programs in many different departments.

- Reviews are becoming an integral part of statewide planning and budgeting processes.

State Activity

Program review differs from state to state. One reason for this is that review relates to state licensing activities and to professional or regional accreditation in ways that have been interpreted differently by various states.

By 1981, agencies in 43 states had authority to approve at least some new programs and agencies in 10 states, could make recommendations about new programs (Barak, 1982). Five states had provisions for approving courses at private institutions and four others allowed state boards to make recommendations to private institutions.

State boards in 18 states had the authority to review at least some existing programs or to make recommendations about them. Agencies in 28 states (7 state coordinating agencies, 21 governing boards) have indicated that they have authority to discontinue programs (Barak, 1982).

The program review practices noted below illustrate the range of current state activity. New York's review system, by far the oldest in the country, covers all levels of higher education and hundreds of public and private institutions. The system in Rhode Island, by contrast, is relatively new and covers a handful of institutions. In Illinois, program review by campuses drives the statewide system. In Maryland, the state agency has established formal agreements with the regional accrediting association. Louisiana uses out-of-state consultants heavily to review both private institutions, which participate voluntarily, and public ones. The process incorporates incentives as well as sanctions. Program review in Virginia is an integral part of statewide planning and budgeting in higher education.

Policy Issues

As state program review expands, it becomes more important for states to consider key aspects of the process, seeking answers to questions like these.

- What is the purpose of program review? To save money? Improve quality? Avoid duplication? Help statewide planning?
- What constitutes a "program?"
- Should program review be by institution? By subject major or degree?
- Should program review be cyclical or ad hoc?
- What, if any, functions do the following have in state review: the campus, the statewide system (e.g., community college system, state college system), independent colleges, students and faculty?
- Who coordinates these functions, and how?
- How should a program be judged? Criteria might be: (1) the extent to which a program fills a need (i.e., is in the public interest, responds to students' interests, merits being offered at more than one institution, provides employment); (2) the cost of continuing a

program; (3) the sufficiency of funds or other resources; (4) the relationship to the mission of the institution.

- How does program review relate to accreditation and state licensing?

- What are the true costs of program review? How much money will it really save?

Policy Implications

Some of the policy implications raised by program review are becoming clearer as states accumulate experience with this relatively new activity. Among major implications are the following:

- Coordination. Close cooperation between the state and postsecondary institutions offers opportunities to reduce the costs of program review, which can be quite substantial.

- Time delays. Reviewing a program is generally thought to require a minimum of one to two years.

- Initiative. Without the cooperation of the campus, program review can dampen campus initiative.

- Special situation of independent institutions. Some independent institutions may gain a decided advantage over public institutions if they are privy to the decisions made about public institutions, yet are themselves free to develop programs that compete with or replace programs in public institutions.

- Campus review of programs. The careful review of programs at the campus is very important. The better internal campus review has been, the easier state review has also been, and the less need there has been for certain types of review.

- Scorekeeping. Counting the number of programs discontinued as a measure of increased efficiency can be misleading. The reverse may be true: where institutions of higher education have been reviewing programs effectively, virtually no programs would be eliminated.

- Mission and potential. If program review limits institutions too rigorously to predefined missions, the result can be detrimental to institutions that have justifiably sought to pursue, even in tight times, worthy new objectives.

- Redundancy. This is a danger when programs are reviewed too frequently or when one group of reviewers duplicates the efforts of another group (e.g., when a state group retraces the steps of a campus group).

Policy Alternatives

1. Campus review -- or state review. The better the campus review, within guidelines developed by the state, usually the more flexibility the campus has.

2. Internal review -- or external review. Costs and credibility are two factors to weigh.

3. Carrot -- or stick. Departments or institutions sometimes lose programs as a result of program review, but the review process can also include incentives, like recognizing the quality of superior programs or rewarding the discontinuance of unnecessary programs.

4. Administrative responsibility. Program review can be developed and carried out by board staff or by board members. It can be solely a state-level responsibility or it can be shared with campuses.

Resources

Barak, Robert J., Program Review in Higher Education: Within and Without. Boulder, Colorado: NCHEMS, 1982.

Barak, Robert J., State-Level Higher Education Program Review. Update: 1979, Boulder, Colorado: SHEEO/NCES Communication Network, 1979.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, The States and Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Coordination and Governance in the 80's. Denver, Colorado: Education Commission of the States, 1980. $7.50.

Glenny, Lyman A. Autonomy of Public Colleges. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.

Glenny, Lyman A. et. al. Presidents Confront Reality: From Edifice Complex to University Without Walls. A report for the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,.1976.

Millard, Richard M. State Boards of Higher Education, AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report, No. 4. Washington, D.C.: AAHE, 1971.

Moos, Malcolm and Frances E. Rourke. The Campus and the State. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959.

Note: Robert J. Barak, director of research and academic affairs, Iowa State Board of Regents, 515-281-3934, has been a source of information for this Issuegram and can provide further information about program review.

ORDER FORM

(See reverse side for list of **Issuegrams***)*

Name _____

Title or Organization _____

Address _____

City, State and ZIP _____

Price: Single copies of Issuegrams are free upon request to the seven ECS Commissioners in each of the 51 member jurisdictions. For others, each Issuegram is $2 **prepaid,** including postage and mailing. Orders for 10 or more copies are $1.50 per copy **prepaid. $1 additional charge on all non-prepaid orders (to cover invoicing).** All Issuegrams are mailed first class. Please make checks payable to the Education Commission of the States. To order by phone or for further information, call Terry Shinkle at 303/830-3820.

____ Check here if you are an ECS Commissioner

____ Please bill me

____ Payment enclosed

Issuegram Number	Number of Copies	Price	Total Due

Total Cost For Order $ _____

Mail this order form to: Distribution Center
EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80295

ecs issuegrams

A service of THE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

ISSUEGRAMS *are summary reports on major education issues written for state leaders. They include background information, analysis of differing views, lists of sources and references – all written for busy readers. Each is updated periodically.*

Issuegrams currently available:

1. Research Findings on Effective Teaching and Schools
2. Achievement Trends in the Arts
3. Collective Bargaining Issues Continue
4. Adult Learning: A Major Trend
5. Low-Cost School Improvement
6. Achievement in Mathematics and Science
7. Testing for Teacher Certification
8. Energy Education: Another Passing Fad?
9. How Well Can Students Read and Write?
10. Special Education and the Law
11. State Programs of School Improvement
12. Compulsory Schooling and Nontraditional Education
13. Education for Economic Growth
14. The Four-Day School Week
15. Setting Up Blue Ribbon Commissions
16. Student Achievement in Public and Private Schools
17. Information Society Challenges Education
18. School Programs To Prevent Drug Abuse
19. Tuition Tax Credits
20. Student Minimum Competency Testing
21. Improving Higher Education Through Budget Incentives
22. Regulation of Postsecondary Institutions: Model Legislation
23. State Policies To Screen And Attract Teachers
24. Teacher Shortages in The Next Decade
25. School Finance Equity
26. School Finance Reform: Past, Present and Future
27. School Finance Litigation
28. Programs for Special Student Populations
29. Responding To Change: Goals for State Public Education
30. State Structures of Elementary/Secondary Governance
31. The State Legislative Voting Process in Education
32. Implementing the Education Block Grant
33. Prayer, the Bible and The Public Schools
34. Curriculum and The Constitution
35. Sex Equity in Public Education
36. Legal Rules for Student Competency Testing
37. Student Skills for a High Technology Economy
38. State Strategic Planning For Education Technology
39. Migrant Education
40. Postsecondary Program Review

It is the policy of the Education Commission of the States to take affirmative action to prevent discrimination in its policies, programs and employment practices.

Please turn page for ordering information.